

WILHELM OF DOORN, TO-DAY'S BRIDEGROOM

By BARON VON RADOWITZ-NEI

Drawing by RALPH BARTON



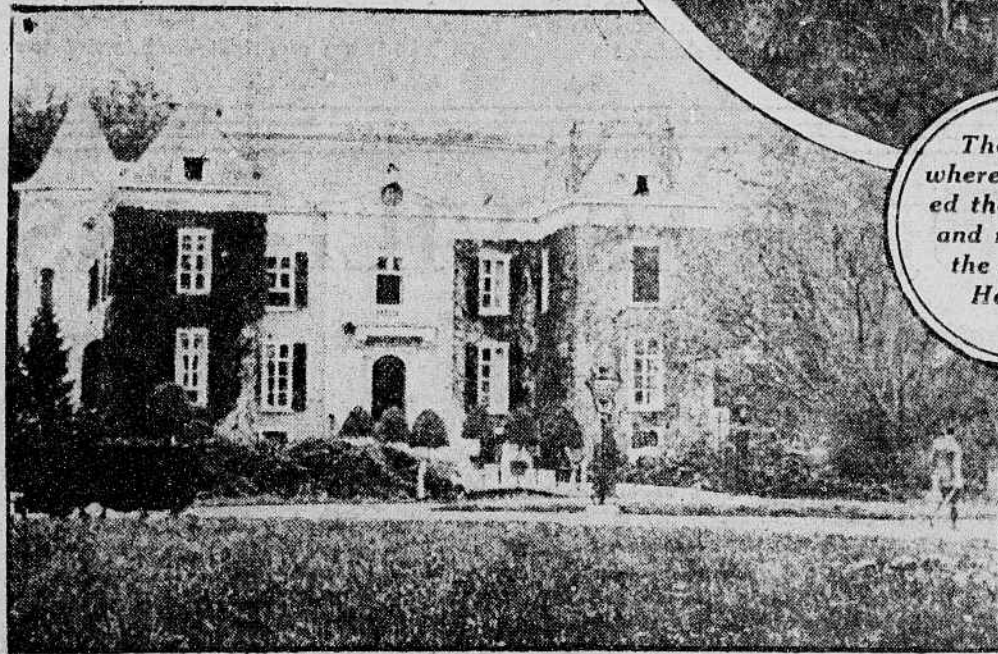
The Groom



The Bride



The chapel where he mourned the Kaiser and now weds the Princess Hermine



Castle at Doorn, where the Kaiser will spend an exile's honeymoon



Castle gate, at which all comers must register, by order of the Allies

removed from one or more of the castles in Germany. The reception hall and library are well appointed, and on the walls are huge paintings of the ancestors of Wilhelm. In the library a great number of costly books are neatly arranged. Fine bronzes are on pedestals.

An astonishing thing to me was that not a single photograph or painting of the Kaiser was to be seen. Before the war the Kaiser's castles were almost covered with photos and paintings. His vanity is well known to the world. But as though he were bowed in humility and wanted to forget all about his days of grandeur and pomp, there was nothing in Doorn to remind him of the past.

Baron Ketteler and I had but a few minutes to wait for Wilhelm to come down to luncheon. As he approached we waited respectfully, and Ketteler motioned with his arm to permit the Kaiser to precede him to the dining room.

"Come, Baron, we're not in Potsdam now," Wilhelm smilingly said, and thumped Ketteler on the back.

Not in Potsdam now! Why, ceremony used to be his strong point, but now in exile he was greeting a plain, ordinary baron as though they were old pals on Broadway, U. S. A.

The dining room is a huge affair, and also luxurious. The table is of mahogany, the linens and silver plain but heavy. Only the porcelain bore the imperial crest.

Wilhelm sat at the head of the table. He was plainly dressed and attendants were ordinary black.

To his right was seated Ketteler, then myself. On the left were two attendants, Captain Sell and Major General von Dommes. They ate little, being occupied mostly by a respectful attention to every movement of the Kaiser. Evidently attendants and servants still regard him as their idol and lord.

It was interesting to see the Kaiser wield a specially constructed silver device, a combination knife and fork. He holds it in his right hand and by rather quick movement is able actually to have a knife and fork in his right hand at the same time. His left hand is helpless; he cannot even hold a cigarette between his fingers. Some dishes, such as steak, are prepared before being served to him, but vegetables and other soft foods that do not necessitate much cutting he is able to manage unaided.

I noticed a red birthmark on the little finger of his right hand. It reminded me that in other days he always wore, at least on public or court occasions, several large diamond rings on the little finger. But no more!

Luncheon lasted only thirty minutes. Wilhelm did most of the talking and the repast was simple. Three dishes were served, a sort of croquette in clam or crab shells, a combination of meat and vegetables and apple turnovers for dessert. He laughingly explained to us that the dessert "must have been made in your honor—we are not used to such extravagance."

Only one glass of wine was served to each of the diners, and a glass of beer, I was told, is the only beverage for dinner.

Conversation at luncheon started between Ketteler and Wilhelm, the latter recalling when the baron served as a lieutenant in the Red Guard Hussars. To me he talked quite casually.

Recalling that I had lived in Paris for eleven years prior to the war, he asked: "Have you been to Paris or London recently?"

"Yes, your majesty," I replied.

"Has there been any change?"

I gave him my impressions and he seemed greatly interested. Incidentally, in his asking about the two cities it was the only time the word "war" was mentioned.

After luncheon we strolled in the garden for half an hour and talked generalities. "What does the new generation think of me?" he asked.

"It knows nothing about you," was my reply.

He sighed.

"I want nothing except to hide myself. But, tell me, has the new generation forgotten its monarchical ideas and the glory of the Hohenzollerns?"

"There is a good deal of monarchical sentiment in Germany," I told him.

"The monarchy will come back; not now, but after some years. I don't know when—the monarchy, not I," he said.

The full significance of his words did not strike me until I pondered over them later. It meant, simply, that he admitted he was beaten—finally and forever. It was his first admission to the world, directly or indirectly, that he considered himself through.

Having lunched with Wilhelm and having been granted such special honor in being allowed to take the photographs, we naturally were considered by the attendants to be close friends of Wilhelm, and they talked rather freely about details of life in exile.

The entire household, I was told, really loved the late Kaiserin. She was kind to them and mothered them all.

"She died of a broken heart more than anything else," one of the attendants said. "The doctors said her end was hastened because she could not go to Bad-Nauheim and take the water cures and baths, but it was grief over exile that caused her death."

The Kaiser wept like a child, attendants said, when the Kaiserin died. He was particularly inconsolable because he could not accompany her body on the trip to Germany.

And now, little more than a year after her death, he is to wed a young princess with five small children! No wonder the monarchists in Germany are outspoken in their opposition to the marriage.

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WILHELM told me in May that he was through; that the monarchy would be restored sometime in Germany, but that he would not be present when it happened. In June I came to New York and told newspaper men, who had heard of my visit to Doorn, that the ex-Kaiser predicted the monarchist movement would restore the throne. The interview got back to Germany and Holland quickly and a denials for obvious political reasons, was issued at Doorn.

But now, with the ex-Kaiser being married to the Princess Hermine of Reuss, confirmation is given indirectly that he knows he is through. When to-day he signs the marriage certificate in the private chapel on his estate of exile he will sign away whatever slim chance he might have had to be restored to the German throne. His only friends, the monarchists, have nearly all deserted him. Cables recently told of their disgust over the former Emperor at sixty-three marrying a young woman with five small children. In Berlin the other day nobility plainly showed their disapproval of the marriage when they shunned and ignored Princess Hermine during a shopping excursion.

What she will gain by the marriage is difficult to compute. She will have only the distinction—if that means anything—of being known as the wife of the ex-Kaiser. Her titles may be as many as her heart desires, but they will do her no good. According to a cable from Holland, she will call herself "Queen Wilhelmina of Prussia," but she will be no more Queen of Prussia than the maid who cleans my room in the hotel. Titles are no longer recognized in Prussia. She can never be a queen of anything, excepting the state of the Kaiser's exile.

Riches? Hardly. Because the ex-Kaiser has been struggling along on an income in millions of paper marks of about \$6,000 a year until he got the American dollars from the sale of his memoirs. Her estates in Silesia left to her by the death two years ago of her husband are greater than her new husband's. "Queen of Doorn" would be a more fitting title for her. As if in a comic opera, her empire will be a twenty-acre estate, with a thirteen-room castle, several meadows and cow pastures, a garden of vegetables, a woodshed, an old pigeon house and a private chapel.

"Queen of Doorn!" Indeed, her subjects will be only a somewhat crestfallen, crippled husband of sixty-three years, her own five children, a dozen or more servants, Dutch attendants and guards and two dachshunds. Yes, you might classify the ex-Kaiser's adult children and grandchildren as subjects, but they have been rather disloyal, and recently objected vigorously to his marriage plans. The Crown Prince Eitel Friedrich and August Wilhelm, sons of the Kaiser, are older than their new stepmother, and several of their children are older than hers.

Loneliness of exile in Doorn drove the ex-Kaiser into matrimony. As a member of a party from the Order of St. George, composed of the old nobility of Prussia, I visited the Kaiser last spring. Others with me were Dr. Hans Vogel, who, by the way, is to perform to-day's marriage ceremony at Doorn; Baron Landsberg, owner of large German estates; Agorn Beumme, the painter and former imperial court photographer, and Baron Ketteler, from Potsdam.

Getting an audience with Wilhelm in exile is a greater task than it was in the days of his pomp and glory. In exile, his fortune and grandeur of court gone, he is under guard and shrinks from old friends and associates. Ludendorff is one of the few old generals who visited him more than once at Doorn, and a secretary at Doorn told me that the Kaiser had received in audience not more than fifty friends in more than two years there.

My real reason for going to Doorn was to get motion pictures. Only one photograph of any kind had been made of the Kaiser in exile, and I succeeded in tricking him into the camera. The fact that I went to the diplomatic school at the University of Bonn and was a schoolmate of the Crown Prince, Eitel Friedrich and August Wilhelm gave me the entrée to Doorn.

"We'll tell Wilhelm we want photographs to show his old friends and to prove that all is well with him," I told my companions.

Our deputation departed from Cologne for the Dutch frontier. I had not written ahead to Doorn of the time we would arrive. Unexpectedly, therefore, we caused consternation in the Kaiser's household, when, with mounds of baggage loaded in automobiles, we drove to the castle grounds and presented our credentials. The Dutch police readily granted us the police permits which every one must have to enter the grounds.

Dutch authorities and attendants maintain strict censorship for the Kaiser. No newspaper man or photographer, excepting my party, has a foot in the grounds. Just the other day I received a cable dispatch stating that at the Kaiser's request all photographers and newspaper men would be barred from the castle grounds and perhaps the town itself during the wedding celebrations.

The estate of the exile is about ten minutes' walk from the center of the town. One must walk along a road leading off the main highway. The road skirting the exile's grounds has an iron fence about ten feet high, the top covered with three rows of barbed wire. It extends entirely around the estate. At the sight of the fence I recalled the story I heard in Berlin that the Kaiser was "in a cage." Many persons in Berlin believe and repeat the story that barbed wire has been stretched all over the estate so that the Kaiser can't escape by airplane.

At the entrance of the estate the Kaiser has had erected a brick building, in the center

of which is the gateway to the grounds. The upper floor of the building is used as quarters for the attendants and the ground floor is occupied by Dutch guards and as their offices for registration of visitors.

An astonishing thing to me is that the building, completed in January, has the color scheme of the old imperial flag. The window shutters are painted black and white, alternately, and as the brick is red it makes a combination of black, white and red—the old German standard.

Before passing into the grounds every one must register in the authorities' book. Whether a tradesman or a general you must sign so the Allied authorities will be able to keep a record of the activities of Wilhelm and his associates. The castle is about half a mile from the entrance building. It is a two-story brick building of the style used by the Dutch for country residences. It really should not be called a castle, because there is little for comparison with the old towered buildings of stone and rock typical of centuries ago. On the second floor in the tower room is the former Kaiser's library. There he writes while standing before a high desk, similar to a bookkeeper's table. The vine-covered second floor rooms in the front of the castle are those that were occupied by the late Kaiserin. In one of them she died. I suppose the suite will now be occupied by the Princess Hermine as "Queen Wilhelmina of Prussia."

On either side of the castle are a number of trees, and a miniature lake lies to the right and left of the entrance, providing somewhat

of a moat. The castle has just thirteen rooms. I learned from attendants some intimate details of the household. Wilhelm has a cook, two kitchen girls, three maids, a porter, chauffeur, four gardeners and two valets, one having been with him during the war.

Every servant is a "Jack of all trades." The porter is an electrician, the chauffeur a plumber, the gardeners know tapestry decoration, carpentry and masonry. When anything goes wrong in the household fixtures it is not necessary to send for outside labor. In this way the Kaiser imagines that he can escape intruders—a reporter, for example, disguised as the plumber!

The woodshed, about which so much has been written, is located in a small grove not far from the castle. It is a rustic affair. As his withered left hand would dangle helplessly from his pocket during the rigorous exercises of sawing wood, Wilhelm stuffs the deformed member inside his trousers at the belt. Great piles of wood, chopped and stacked neatly, are at the right side of the shed. On the left, when we took photographs, were stacks of limbs and trunks of trees awaiting the handiwork of his once imperial majesty. Attendants told me that all the wood used in furnace and stoves had been cut by Wilhelm. To his particular friends or associates he presents a piece of the wood he has chopped, and on the smooth side he writes his signature in blue pencil or crayon. Quite a contrast to the gold

cigarette cases, autographed photographs and decorations he used to present in other days. I have a block of the Kaiser's "hand-carved" wood, and it is duly autographed.

The private chapel, where he worships daily and where to-day's wedding service will be performed, is located at no great distance from the castle. The services that he leads for the household last fully three-quarters of an hour, and it is a matter of general knowledge that he used to conduct religious services on his yachts and warships before and during the war. He is a Protestant, but much interested in Catholicism. The attendants said that at one time the Kaiser wished to have the private chapel rebuilt. It is very small, seating not more than twelve persons comfortably. The authorities, however, refused to grant permission, giving as an excuse that the castle is an historic spot, and although Wilhelm owns it he is in their custody and subject to their

orders. I suppose the Dutch want the place to remain intact or unchanged for purposes of sightseeing Americans in years to come. In outward appearance the chapel looks more like a tomb.

The first day I spent in the exile estate I noticed some fine cattle grazing. Later I learned that the cows belonged to a neighboring Dutch resident and that the Kaiser "rents" the pasture and gets his pay in a liberal supply of milk, butter and cheese for his household. How the mighty have fallen! Renting a meadow to provide dairy products for his table!

The real surprise of Doorn is the changed physical and mental appearance of the former Kaiser. I had last seen him in January, 1915, on the Russian battlefield. I was then liaison officer between German and Austrian headquarters, and it was my privilege to drive his automobile from Koniepol to Wlozowa (pro-

flap over the knees. His trousers had been stuffed into them. His shirt was flannel, white with narrow stripes, and his necktie was black.

His steel-colored eyes were sharp and seemed almost bulging. His hair had changed from brown to gray. His once upturned mustache needed the attention of a barber. He had grown a beard, too, as gray as the hair on his head, and it, too, was unkempt.

I was so astonished at the change in the seven years that I could hardly acknowledge his greeting. He quickly put me at ease, however, by stating that Baron Landsberg had told him about our plans to photograph the grounds and castle.

"I have never allowed any one to take pictures here before, but I know your good intentions," he said.

Then he looked at the small camera at the side of Beumme and added:

"I do not want to be photographed. I do not like those snapshot machines."

It would have been less majestic to take photographs of him against his wishes in other days, but times have changed, haven't they?

The most interesting event of my three-day visit was luncheon the second day in the castle as the guest of Wilhelm. It afforded me an opportunity to look around the castle interior, as I stopped at night with my companions at the Hotel Pabst in Doorn and went every morning to the estate.

The place is luxuriously fitted with furniture

An intimate story is told herewith of the life of the Kaiser in exile. At the same time, new and interesting details are related of Princess Hermine, his bride, and her family. The author, Baron Clemens von Radowitz-Nei, was a visitor for three days at Doorn. He was a guest of Wilhelm, with three other German noblemen. Baron von Radowitz-Nei was a fellow student of the Kaiser's sons at the University of Bonn, and was long associated with the diplomatic service of the German government.